

JTED Reform Proposal

Background:

Vocational education, commonly referred to as CTE or Career and Technical Education, allows students to learn about various careers, industries and trades and then to actually acquire the skills that enable them to begin a satisfying career in a field of their choosing.

Since only 10% of high school students ever graduate from a 4 year university, it is imperative that real-world training be offered to kids who want to make a living after high school. Courses such as computer repair and networking, auto repair, culinary, welding, fire science, cosmetology and others provide industry-certified training and a solid foundation for success in a career.

The challenge of providing this type of valuable education is that the equipment can be expensive and the courses must keep up with industry standards. For many public high schools, these are stumbling blocks to providing the much-needed training. In order to facilitate CTE courses, a system was developed in 1990 called Joint Technological Education Districts (JTEDs). These districts were set up to allow public school districts to cooperate together, share common facilities, centralize expensive equipment and specialized instructors so that kids could have the best vocational education possible. The most prominent example of a JTED is the East Valley Institute of Technology in Mesa.

In 2002 the chair of the House Education Committee requested a special performance audit of these programs citing concern that they had been in place for over ten years and had never been formally reviewed. Furthermore, in 2002, the legislature placed a temporary prohibition on the formation of new districts or additions to existing districts due to concerns over their dramatic growth.

The audit was released in December 2004 and contained many valuable recommendations. After much debate throughout last year's legislative session most of the issues were addressed, however some were done for one year only. The bill also created a Task Force on Joint Technological Education Districts in order to fully address the remaining issues.

Some of the permanent reforms were as follows:

1. Clarified that courses in a facility owned OR operated by a member district are subject to the 1.25 ADM cap.
2. K – 8 JTED courses are not to be included in the JTED ADM.
3. K – 6 students enrolled in CTE courses shall not be funded with JTED funds.

4. Member districts shall use any JTED monies to supplement and not supplant base year CTE courses with a three year implementation phase-in period.
5. JTEDs shall use funds to “enhance career and technical education and vocational education courses, and directly related equipment and facilities.”
6. JTED or member district shall only count 9-12 students in ADM for courses that are approved jointly by JTEDs and member districts.

Some of the larger issues found by the Auditor General that remain are as follows:

1. Significant revenues are passed through to member districts.
2. Significant differences exist in terms of quality and rigor between the central courses and satellite courses.
3. Overlapped funding with students counting for more than 1 ADM (double and triple counting) as well as being included in the calculation of community college full time student enrollment counts.
4. Ultimately, the session law cap needs to be addressed

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Purpose: In order for Vocational Education to expand and serve the needs of our student population, the funding and governance must be clarified and transparent. The following proposal outlines policies that would achieve that goal. Under this proposal, some courses that are currently receiving funding would no longer be able to. These classes that would no longer qualify as a JTED course would still be able to receive regular ADM as any other high school course. The perception that JTEDs are “out-of-control” would no longer be viable. Accountability for the quality and success of the courses would rest with the funding mechanism and the JTED boards. The legislature would no longer have to worry about caps since only true JTED courses would receive funding.

INCREASE FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Currently, ADM is negotiated via intergovernmental agreements (IGA) differently throughout the state. Conceptually, these reforms would provide additional clarification of financial provisions between joint technological school districts and their member school districts. Additionally, better data on vocational education programs statewide would enhance policy discussions and would provide districts with the information necessary to make appropriate decisions locally.

1. Clarify that the tax rate is \$0.05/\$100 assessed valuation. This would prohibit JTEDs from exceeding the statutory limitations on taxation.
2. One of the Auditor General's recommendations is for the Legislature to consider whether additional funds provided for vocational education should be restricted to vocational education purposes. This reform was contained in last year's bill, however this proposal would provide, for the first time, reporting requirements to ensure that the money is spent appropriately.

JTEDs would be required to report to ADE CTE where the information would then be aggregated and summarized for distribution to the Legislature, Governor and the State Board for Career and Vocational Education. Needed data would include ADM, course listings, descriptions and costs, completion rates, graduation rates of participants and post-school career opportunities and career placement success.

3. IGAs will be replaced by actual contracts and billing statements between JTEDs, member districts and community colleges detailing the financial and accountability provisions, respective responsibilities and type and quality of instruction offered.
4. Funding will continue to flow through the JTED from the State.

CLARIFY GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Although A.R.S. 15-393 Subsection A states that "The management and control of the joint district are vested in the joint technological education district governing board.", in practice it has been unclear which superintendent or governing board has not only the authority but the responsibility for funding and quality control. By providing additional statutory guidance JTEDs and participating school districts will have the framework necessary for quality oversight of technological education statewide.

5. For JTED courses, the JTED governing board WILL oversee the quality of program/course, teacher funding, facility reimbursement, teacher quality, etc.

DEFINE LEVEL OF ENHANCED INSTRUCTION EXPECTATIONS

1. *The Auditor General's report illuminated the practice of flipping existing vocational courses taught at high schools into JTED courses and recommended that the Legislature determine the best method to fund vocational education throughout the State. In addition, the Legislature should consider whether resource limits are needed for vocational education funding. This proposal changes the paradigm of funding from a site basis to a course basis.*

Currently, the terms "satellite" and "central", although used commonly, are not defined in statute. The concept is derived from a sentence in

statute that separates funding if a course is taught in a facility “owned or operated” by a school district.

This proposal will fund courses that meet the statutory definition regardless of where they are being taught.

6. Define a JTED as a program that offers JTED courses. Last session the legislature began the process of defining JTEDs by requiring that they “shall use any monies received pursuant to this article to enhance career and technical education and vocational education courses, and directly related equipment and facilities.” This proposal codifies the commonly accepted and endorsed mission of career and technical education.

The Auditor General’s report also noted that the Legislature should consider revising statute to clarify the type and level of classes that may be included as vocational and technical for JTED funding. Last year’s bill began that process by determining what grade levels would be included but this proposal now describes what a JTED course should like.

7. Define JTED courses as:

1. *Courses that lead to a career.*
2. *Taught by a CTE certified instructor*
3. *Requires specialized equipment.*
4. *Lead to some kind of certification accepted by industry as achieving a certain degree of competency in the field.*
5. *Must meet for a minimum of 2.5 hours per class period.*
6. *Approved by ADE CTE.*
7. *For sophomores, juniors, and seniors.*

If the above reforms are agreed to, the growth cap provisions should be lifted.

Sincerely,



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